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GOLDEN PRECEPTS

Point Loma Publications is happy to announce the publication of G. de Purucker's *Golden Precepts*, which we expect will be off the press by November 10th in time to greet readers and friends around the world at Christmastime. Its eight chapters are titled: The Path to the Heart of the Universe; The Great Heresy of Separateness; The Power of Thought; Old Age, Disease, Death — and Rebirth; The Inner God; The Path of Chelaship; Forgiveness and Love; The Buddhas of Compassion and the Pratyeka Buddhas. We quote here the Editors' Preface as sufficiently introductory to our readers of the content of this little volume, and follow this with excerpts from the last chapter.

"This little book contains teaching about what mystics of all religions call the Way or the Path: the journey of the pilgrim-soul towards the Heart of the Universe, the discovery of the Self in search of the SELF. Eventually all must travel this pathway. Some find it stumblingly, seemingly by hap or hazard; many do not know that there is a Way, still that there is a guide to direct their steps. For the few only is there certain knowledge of this. Yet in the end, both for the few and the many, the Teacher is the guide, and the guide is also the Teaching.

"Here in these few pages is sketched that teaching. It is the essential core of what was taught in the esoteric schools of philosophy in the Orient, the Near-East and indeed, since the founding of the Theosophical Society, in certain parts of the West. Yet it is as old as time and has been cherished and tested in every age. Here it is passed on pure and untarnished. As it was received, so is it given. *Iti mâya śrutam*. Thus have I heard, are the introductory words of the Teacher as he talks to his Disciples.

"The teachings herein set forth are universal; and whatever bears the stamp of universality is rooted in Truth. Truth is for all men, for the beginner as well as for the esoteric student, for Occidental as well as for Oriental. Wherever one stands in life, the first steps to attain it can be taken, because Truth is never denied any man if in his heart he asks for it.

"In this special edition of *Golden Precepts*, the Editors have added the subtitle: *A Guide to Enlightened Living*; for by following these teachings and making them daily companions of one's thought and action, one climbs, step by step, with confidence and growing vision along that Path of Enlightenment towards the glorious destiny of the human race.

"The Editors have also made necessary alterations and transpositions in the text. In the first (1931) edition, containing the author's original preface, the text was in the form of a colloquy between Teacher and Disciple, a form that permits wide literary latitude in repetition, and without the usual smooth transition of subject from paragraph to paragraph. The change to straight expository writing, requested by the author, has required the editing we believe he would approve. The content in both thought and language has been strictly preserved.

"We repeat here the closing paragraph from the author's original Preface:

"For all students of the Ancient Wisdom, for all who yearn to know something of the life that Chelas — disciples — of the Ancient Wisdom lead. I know that this collection of extracts from the archaic teachings of the Wisdom-Religion of mankind, as taught in the Holy Order of Compassion, will be helpful and stimulating."

HELEN TODD

W. EMMETT SMALL

BUDDHAS OF COMPASSION

"Diamond-heart" is the term used when speaking of the Mahâtmas; and it has a symbolic meaning, signifying the crystal-clear consciousness reflecting the misery of the world, receiving and reflecting the call for help, reflecting the Buddhic Splendor in the heart of every struggling soul on earth; but yet as hard as the diamond for all calls of the personality, the self-personality, and first of all of the Mahâtma's own personal nature.

Should the Mahâtma abandon his physical body and live in his other principles, he becomes *de facto* a Nirmânakâya, living in the auric atmosphere of the earth and working for mankind invisibly.

The Nirmânakâya is a complete man possessing all the principles of his constitution, except the Linga-sarîra and its accompanying physical body. He lives on the plane of being next superior to the physical plane, and his purpose in so doing is to save men from themselves by being with them, and by continuously instilling thoughts of self-sacrifice, of self-forgetfulness, of spiritual and moral beauty, of mutual help, of compassion, of pity. Thus, it is that he too forms one of the Stones in the Guardian Wall invisibly surrounding mankind.

Most Mahâtmas prepare to become Buddhas of Compassion, and therefore to renounce a Nirvânic state.

The real Buddha of Compassion renounces Nirvâna for himself in order to help the world, for he is compassion incarnate. He lives through aeons, working for all that is; and it is this utter self-sacrifice of the human being, of the most sublime and lofty type conceivable to men, which makes of a Buddha so holy and exalted a being.

In the distinction between the Pratyeka-Buddha and the Buddhas of Compassion there enters the element of a deliberate choice which each one must some day make.

Which path will you then take, the path of the Buddhas of Compassion, or the path of the Pratyeka-Buddhas? Either is noble; both lead to heights of spiritual sublimity — one the path of compassion, the path divine; the other, the path of personal rest, utter peace, bliss, and living in the Divine. Some day you must make that choice. But the results of

making that choice, of choosing the road of self-forgetfulness and pity and impersonal love for all others, for all things, while temporarily holding you in the realms of illusion, of matter, will ultimately lead you by a road, straighter than any other, to the very core of the core of the Universal Heart; for you shall have obeyed the impersonal commands of Cosmic Love, and that means allying yourself consciously with divinity.

Nirvāna if chosen for oneself can be looked upon as a species of sublimated spiritual selfishness: for the attempt of trying to gain Nirvāna for oneself alone is a solely individual yearning to free oneself from manifested life, to stand apart in utter peace and utter bliss, in pure consciousness, and without regard for anything else.

How different from this is the teaching of our Lord: "Can I remain in utter bliss when one single human heart beats in pain?" Give me rather, is the thought, the suffering of personal existence, so that I may help and comfort others instead of attaining the purely individual selfish bliss of individual Paranishpanna.

Compassion is the very nature and fabric of the structure of the Universe itself, the characteristic of its being, for compassion means "feeling with," and the Universe is an Organism, a vast and mighty organism, an organism without bounds, which might otherwise be called Universal Life-consciousness.

Compassion is the fundamental law of Nature's own heart. It means becoming at one with the divine Universe, with the universal life and consciousness. It means harmony; it means peace; it means bliss; it means impersonal Love.

Having this Vision Sublime, do not shut your eyes to the misery of others, but devote your life like the Buddhas of Compassion to help all things, first by raising yourself — impersonally, not personally — so that you may help others to see the Light divine.

Is there anything so beautiful, so high, so noble, as bringing comfort to broken hearts, light to obscure minds, the teaching of men how to love, how to love and to forgive?

To bring peace to men, to give them hope, to give them light, to show them the way out of the intricate maze of material existence, to bring back to one's fellow-men the knowledge of their own essential divinity as a reality — is not that a sublime work?

Peace to all Beings!

—G. DE PURUCKER, *Golden Precepts*, Chapter 8.

Point Loma Publications:

Golden Precepts: A Guide to Enlightened Living,
by G. de Purucker
Hardcase, ea. 192 pp. \$5.00; Paperback, \$3.50

Wind of the Spirit, by G. de Purucker
Paperback, 282 pp. \$3.25.

H. P. Blavatsky Defended, by Iverson L. Harris
Paperback, 174 pp. \$3.00.

Theosophy Under Fire, by Iverson L. Harris
Paperback, 88 pp. \$3.00.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. It is with the greatest interest that I read in *The Eclectic Theosophist Newsletter* No. 3 of the possibility of the printing by Theosophical University Press (Pasadena, California) of the large Encyclopedic Glossary, the manuscript of which was prepared many years ago at Point Loma. What can you tell me of this?

A. The idea of having an Encyclopedic Glossary prepared for publication arose in the Literary Committee, one of the many activities at the Point Loma headquarters. It was presided over by Dr. de Purucker, who delegated Geoffrey Barborka to act as chairman and editor of the project. He assembled a committee of trained writers, experts in their own particular lines of research, as well as Theosophists of many years' training. For instance, among these was Dr. Henry T. Edge, a personal pupil of H.P.B.

Geoffrey Barborka met weekly with his Committee, who submitted their work on their designated subject. After these were prepared and passed on by the Chairman they were sent to Dr. de Purucker, who went very carefully over each item, each article, often adding to it extensively.

It would be a boon to many of us to have this Encyclopedic Glossary. Nor do I think it a drawback that it was prepared years ago and thus would not have the latest references to modern science; and for these reasons: (a) one could go on from year to year withholding publication so as to include 'the very latest findings'; (b) these findings themselves are subject to change, rejection, etc., continually; (c) it is the light thrown on the basic issues on all these subjects by Theosophy and Occult Science that is needed. One can always refer to reliable scientific journals for their latest findings.

I do hope this important Encyclopedia will be produced without delay.

—ELSIE BENJAMIN, Worthing, England

Q. Although I find your *Eclectic Theosophist Newsletter* attractive and interesting, I wonder if it might be considered primarily as a vehicle to push the writings of G. de Purucker? Some of my correspondents look upon these with as little confidence as they do upon Leadbeater's effusions. (*From a lawyer in British Columbia, Canada.*)

A. So far as the Directors of Point Loma Publications are concerned, we feel that nothing could be more helpful and enlightening to the whole Theosophical Movement, to say nothing of the world in general, than making available, and passing on, G. de P.'s illuminating expositions of the Teachings of the Masters and of H.P.B. How many of Dr. de Purucker's writings have you read and studied to qualify you to pass judgment? You quote some critic as saying: "His writings are loaded with misconceptions of H.P.B.'s teachings." I demand a bill of particulars. As a lawyer yourself, either as a prosecutor or counsel for the defense, I am sure you would not accept any such general pleading. I challenge any open-minded reader to point out a similarity, to say nothing of an identity, between G. de P.'s scholarly

perceptive, and wise expositions of the teachings of Theosophy, and Leadbeater's psychic vagaries.

I cite just one sentence from G. de P.'s "The Exoteric and the Esoteric H.P. Blavatsky": "... it is our duty, as Brother-Theosophists, as common members of the Theosophical Movement, to see to it that the Message which she brought to us, and gave into our hands as a holy charge, shall be kept pure and unadulterated, and shall be passed on to our descendants of succeeding generations just as we have received it. 'As I have received it, thus must I pass it on, not otherwise. *Iti mâyâ śrutam*: Thus have I heard'."

An old Arabian proverb comes to mind: "He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool; shun him; He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is simple; teach him; He who knows and knows not that he knows, is asleep; wake him; He who knows, and knows that he knows, is wise: follow him."

I believe, from my own personal experience, that G. de P. falls in the last category, and that is why I, for one, followed him. Day after day, week after week, month after month, and for more than 12 years in intimate association, listening to him on the public platform, and in private teaching, I observed by both his statemanship and his clear vision, that he was a Leader and Teacher by Natural fitness. So, though the publication and perpetuation of his writings is by no means the sole purpose of Point Loma Publications, it is certainly one of its principal objectives.

Speaking for myself, I do not accept G. de P.'s teachings simply on the basis of exoteric or esoteric authority; I accept them because I have received repeatedly evidence that brings conviction to the mind. You, as a lawyer, will surely appreciate that.

—IVERSON L. HARRIS

BOOK REVIEWS

H. P. Blavatsky and *The Secret Doctrine: Commentaries on Her Contributions to World Thought*. A Quest Book Original. Edited by Virginia Hanson. The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A. Paperback, \$2.25, 227 pages.

The content of this volume might roughly be divided into three aspects of the over-all subject: H. P. Blavatsky and her great work *The Secret Doctrine*: what it is; H.P.B. and her effect on the world around her; and, third, H.P.B., who really was she? Under the first come Hugh Murdoch's "The Days and Nights of Brahmâ", Helen Zahara's "Man—the Miracle of Miracles", Christmas Humphreys' "The Pattern and the Law", E. L. Gardner's "The Celestial Laboratory", Seymour D. Ballard's "The Basis for the Unconscious as Found in The Secret Doctrine", and Norman S. Hankin's "The Secret Doctrine — a Guide to Truth".

Under the second category fall the important contributions from Boris Zirkoff and L. Gordon Plummer, who explain the "mystery" of H.P.B. as Tulku, and further make clear, to quote de Zirkoff, "that *The Secret Doctrine* in its essential framework, is a comprehensive outline of the heretofore secret science or philosophy of occultism, publicly given out by at least two Initiates of the Brotherhood of Adepts through the intermediary of their direct Messenger, H. P. Blavatsky."

The aspect of H.P.B.'s effect on the world of her time and today is well covered by several, including Sri Madhava Ashish, Geoffrey Barborka, and W. Emmett Small. The latter relates the not too well recognized historical fact of H.P.B.'s enormous influence on Ireland's Literary Renaissance. Katherine A. Beechey's article on H.P.B.'s attitude toward social reform, and Gerrit Munnik's on her influence on Modern Art, also fall within this area.

We refer briefly again to our first division. Murdoch's stimulating contribution compares modern scientific theories of the universe, such as the Steady State Theory, the Oscillating Universe, etc., with H.P.B.'s views and those of the ancient Hindus. He finds considerable common ground. The ancient teaching epitomized in the Third Fundamental Postulate of *The Secret Doctrine* is "the application of the law of periodicity to the universe itself." "Although at the philosophical level the concepts [of the S.D.] expressed here go rather deeper than the ordinary scientific ideas of the material universe, there is a very strong affinity with some of the important concepts of scientific cosmology." The author adds: "The expansion of the universe was first seriously considered about 35 years after *The Secret Doctrine* was first published in 1888 . . . The concept of an oscillating universe, which on present evidence has as good a chance as any other theory of proving correct, bears a remarkable resemblance to the idea put forward in *The Secret Doctrine*."

Helen Zahara gives a description of man's history and constitution from the standpoint of the Ancient Wisdom, a mini-condensation of the basic ideas of *The Secret Doctrine*. This includes the story of the coming into being of the universe, its vast cycles of periodic activity and rest, the hierarchies which compose it, "all links in an endless chain of existence with no apparent beginning and no apparent end . . . All are part of the one hierarchical ladder of being."

Christmas Humphreys' particularly appealing essay interweaves with the subject the biographical and compelling personal touch of one who has experienced what he writes about. It includes most persuasive paragraphs on Karma, and concludes: Today in all the "welter of ill-digested doctrines and rootless ethics, *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky stands supreme and, though it is difficult to believe, unique . . . For here is a work in which, for the student willing to stretch the intellect to its limits and to add the light of the intuition, is to be found as nowhere else a reasonable, coherent, all-embracing outline of the origin and ceasing-to-be of the universe, the laws which dominate the process, and the part played in it by Man."

We note the birthplaces of the contributors are England, Russia, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S.A. and that the authors are not limited to members of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) but include a number of those raised in the Point Loma tradition — a happy example of applied eclecticism, where the aims and purposes are directed in dedication to the great Theosophical Movement. Thus we have here a gathering of weighed and considered thought from students whose many years of study of *The Secret Doctrine* and an endeavor to apply Theosophical principles to daily living make it a book of serious (and most interesting) value. All Theosophists should have it on hand. All libraries should possess it.

—THOMAS NUGENT

Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation, by Ian Stevenson, M.D., New York, Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research, 1966.

Dr. Stevenson, Chairman of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Virginia, U.S.A., discusses his investigations into twenty cases (among hundreds) of rebirth or re embodiment, his studies having led him to such countries as India, Ceylon, Brazil, Alaska, and Lebanon. Comprehensive summaries follow these extensive and well documented reports; and the book concludes with a General Discussion of some 60 pages. A conveniently arranged Index is included.

One could wish that the writer in his considerations and observations had referred more to the knowledge that the great teachers among ancient civilizations had, as well as later thinkers. It would have supplemented and deepened the observations on these 'cases'. (We refer to the numerous analogous cases of rebirth after a relatively short time on this earth.)

It is again the old story, often repeated: modern science makes 'discoveries', comes to certain conclusions in regard to these scientific findings, which had been studied and described ages ago and well worth paying attention to. Evidently it is necessary for man to rediscover things, continually refinding, reanalyzing — thus confirming what has been known throughout the centuries in certain circles.

The student of the ancient esoteric philosophy, on the basis of his studies, knows that in the Schools of Antiquity cases analogous to those treated by Dr. Stevenson were considered, and clear indications given as to the reliability of the investigations; among other things: *what* rebirth or reincarnation in reality *is*; for instance, what part of the human spiritual and psychical composition *can* and what *never* can reincarnate.

H. P. Blavatsky often discussed and elucidated analogous cases in *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*. Consult, for instance, *Isis*, I, 351, and her article "Theories about Reincarnation and Spirits." See also Dr. de Purucker's *Studies in Occult Philosophy*: "Fingerprints and Reincarnation" and "A Case of Quick Reincarnation or Clairvoyance," in which this great scholar of the esoteric sciences gives replies based on his knowledge of the ancient mysteries. Even more light may be obtained from a study of de Purucker's *The Esoteric Tradition*.

However, for a direct knowledge of psychic and spiritual matters, preparation is obligatory and a deep study must be made of the Kârana-Śarira and the Kâranopâdhi. The time is probably not ripe for a profound and more direct study of psychic and spiritual matters. As is well known in the esoteric schools, no sincere student of the immortality of human consciousness will ever find the truth *without* a profound insight into man's composite nature and *without* actual experience of it in himself.

After these observations we would nevertheless point out that extremely much can be learned from Dr. Stevenson's book. We must consider it a work of great value which will, no doubt, set many people thinking upon the 'hypotheses' given (*hypothesis*: a starting point for investigation.) Clearly the writer has discovered the difference between *individuality* and *personality*, though this aspect is not sufficiently ex-

plained because the subject of the Monad and its projection (the reincarnating ego) is not treated.

The student will especially note Dr. Stevenson's conclusion that in practically all cases the memory of a former life fades away as the subject gets older: "identification between the ages of 3 and 7 is strongest." Truly an old theosophical teaching. The author gives an excellent table of the "length of personation," a fine survey of the fading of memory after 7 to 10 years. This information would be particularly valuable if supplemented by a study of the real causes of this fading or 'forgetting,' and the relation between a short post-mortem existence and the spiritual condition of Sukhâvati (Devachan).

The cases of ESP that the author has investigated and discussed scientifically are worthy of full attention; but the reader must study and form his own judgment about each case. As the author states: "I am doubtful if many readers will agree about any one case, for we all reach belief and conviction on these matters, as on all, at different levels of exposure to evidence; and we differ also about what we shall agree to call evidence. I believe, however, that the evidence favoring reincarnation as a hypothesis for the cases of this type has increased since I published my review in 1960."

Once more, an important book by a sincere, honest and deeply interested investigator, which will not fail to influence the world to the good and promulgate knowledge. The student of the ancient and repeatedly confirmed esoteric teachings will profit most by it, because he will be able to 'see through' many of the cases.

—J. H. VENEMA

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

T. Christmas Humphreys, London, England. — Congratulations on the magnificent work you are doing in the U.S.

James Hitchcock, M.D., Greenville, N.H. — I consider H.P.B.'s *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* masterpieces, admittedly far beyond my grasp, except for my distinct feeling that they are dealing with Eternal Truths which elude many of our present-day materialistic thinkers. I believe that true Wisdom is not to be found through the use of microscopes, telescopes, slide-rules or even IBM computers.

Elsie Benjamin, Worthing, England. — Referring to your last (No. 5) issue, I think the discussion "A Commonsense Approach to 1975" is excellent and most timely. I agree fully with everything Iverson Harris says on the subject, and would like to contribute two thoughts. I refer to Vol. VIII, *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Reports of a conversation between H.P.B. and Charles Johnston, where on page 402 she is quoted: "But that is not the only work of the adepts. At much shorter periods (she had been speaking of the Great Teachers who come periodically and found a Religion: Krishna, Zoroaster, Jesus, etc.) they send forth a messenger to try to teach the world. Such a period comes in the last quarter of each century, and the Theosophical Society represents their work in this epoch." There is no promise here that the Theosophical Society will always deserve this. Also, a study of social history during the last quarter of the 19th century shows that the effort from the Lodge must have been more far-flung than even the founding of the T.S. In so many avenues of human activity and thinking, men were broadening out and seeking more knowledge, more enlightenment and more understanding.

I think sometimes we act like greedy children, reaching out for more food when we haven't eaten what is on our plates. How much do we know or understand of what was given us in the 1875 effort? How much appreciation does the Messenger of that period receive even from many theosophists today?"

Jan H. Venema, The Hague, Holland. — Iverson Harris' words in *Newsletter* No. 5 about the "Great Expectations" (Dickens!) for 1975 are being translated into Dutch by one of our younger friends. Later, those of Gordon Plummer — all very good in these times of 'Adventism', as we call it here, when speculations are expressed as to the coming of The Great Light. (The Editors look forward to receiving further comment from our friends in Holland — and, of course, from other countries as well.)